

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – All Saints’**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**

**Scripture: John 11:32-44**

*Note: This is the lesson plan for All Saints Day. Check with your clergy person about what propers you are using for this Sunday. Some churches use All Saints, others use the Sunday Propers.*

**Background:** During the last weeks of Ordinary Time in Lectionary Cycle B, the Gospel of Mark, our primary guide, continues. The kingdom of God is open for all people. We hear this message in the readings about the rich man, the disciples jockeying for position, the blind man, the saints, the poor widow, and even Pilate as he queries Jesus about being a king. We don't have to pass an entrance exam; we are already in the kingdom. Through all the changes that occur in our lives, what will not change is God's love for each of us. The kingdom that Jesus is proclaiming is already here and yet is also still to come – the undercurrent of Advent, which is coming near.

**A Notation for This Week’s Gospel**

We step aside from the flow of the propers and celebrate all the saints. We stop. We notice. We are surrounded by a flock of witnesses in our midst -- many who have gone before us, some we are just now releasing, and still more with a full life ahead of them. Jesus raises back to life his friend, Lazarus. Lazarus will eventually die, but for now, those who are following Jesus need to know that death has had its stinger removed. "Unbind him and let him go", says Jesus. Each of us, on our last day on this side of life, will know that unbinding and that letting go.

**Theme: Saints**

**Before Class:** The focus of today's lesson is All Saints Day. Instead of focusing on the Scripture appointed, we have activities featuring Saints - to include the "saints" among us -- which is all of us! Two separate craft ideas are offered. You choose which one you want to use.

For the Saint's medallions, you will need to make the Corn Starch Clay – (see recipe below), a few toothpicks, and some scraps of cardboard. If you do not have time to make clay, you can find some at your local craft store. Or instead of using clay, you can bring in stamp pads and white paper to make ‘saint prints’. A container of wipes would be helpful -- or at least paper towels and some water. You may need a copy of The Hymnal.

**Corn Starch Clay**

*1 cup corn starch*

*2 cups baking soda*

*1 1/4 cups water*

*Mix all ingredients in a sauce pan. Cook over medium heat stirring constantly until the mixture looks like mashed potatoes. Spoon mixture onto a piece of aluminum foil spread out flat on your counter. When the mixture is cool enough to touch, knead it a few times. Place clay in a plastic bag and refrigerate.*

*The clay will keep for weeks in the refrigerator. (It also can be colored by adding food color when the mixture is still liquid.*

**Beginning:** If you are comfortable using music in your class, begin the day by teaching one verse of "I Sing a Song of the Saints of God." (Hymnal, # 293). If you would like to play the song for the children, there are many sites that have the music. Here is one that has the piano accompaniment. <http://www.hymnsite.com/lyrics/umh712.sht> and video of a parish singing the song that you could play for the children. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=weBT5FgApKY>.

If you are not comfortable singing, simply tell the children that today is All Saints' Day, and we will be figuring out what that means.

**Opening Prayer:** Thank you God, for bringing us saints as examples. Help us to remember that you also call each of us to be a saint. Amen.

**The Story:** Tell the children that we call people who choose to follow Jesus "saints." "Saints" help other people to follow Jesus. Today we have a story of two sisters and a brother. The sisters are named Martha and Mary and their brother is named: Lazarus. They are all saints.

Mary follows Jesus and so her friends follow her to Jesus. Martha follows Jesus and her friends follow Jesus. Lazarus was supposed to be dead, but Jesus raised him from his death, called upon him, and he also followed Jesus. So we could say Saint Mary, Saint Martha, and Saint Lazarus followed Jesus.

Do we know any "saints?" Are there any saints in our room now? (Ask the children: "Is \_\_\_\_\_ - and fill in the name of one of the children -- a saint? Keep going until you have named each child.)

### **Saint Prints:**

**Option One:** Give each child a chunk of the Corn Starch Clay you have made, and let them play with it. You could show them how to make a model of themselves -- a very simple "snow man" technique making three balls and placing them on top of each other -- or a ball and a cylinder, placing the ball on top of the cylinder. Pinch out arms, if you want. Let them parade their saints around the table.

Then, tell the children that God has given each of us a thumb print that is different from anyone else's. Take a minute to notice each other's thumb prints. (Since you have been working with the clay, it will be easier to see the markings on our thumbs.) Tell them we could call our thumb prints our Saint Prints. Then give each child a small piece of the clay - and show them how to make a ball, and then flatten it on a little piece of cardboard. Tell them this will be their Saint medallion. Show the children how to make a thumb print in the middle and, if they want, scratch their initials underneath it with a toothpick. Tell the children these will need to dry, so you will take care of them and next week they can take them home with them. When you have finished, give the children either the wipes or paper towels and water to get all the clay off their hands.

**Option Two:** If you have decided to do the ink thumb prints, be sure to explain to the children that each of us has a different thumb print - no two are exactly alike. Then, give each child a square of paper and let them take turns pressing their thumb on the ink pad and transferring their print to the paper. Tell them that these are our Saints Prints and they can take them home with them after class.

**Getting Closure:** If you sang "I sing a song of the saints of God," you could close by singing it again. Or, if you choose not to do so, invite the children to greet each other, using Saint before their names. Hi, Saint Colin, I am Saint Hilary for example. You will be greeting the children in the same way, also.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for calling us to be your saints. Amen.

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